

Congress of the United States
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November 5, 2003

Meghan Kissell, MSW
Director, Communication and Advocacy
American Medical Women's Association
Attention: Local Legends
801 North Fairfax Street
Suite 400
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Ms. Kissell,

The Institute of Medicine defines public health as *"what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy."* The State of Vermont can be proud of its collective accomplishments in improving the health of all Vermonters. Those accomplishments are due in large part to the vision and leadership of Dr. Jan Kirk Carney, former Health Commissioner for the State of Vermont. It is to honor Dr. Carney's exemplary leadership and her unfailing commitment to the citizens of Vermont that I respectfully nominate Dr. Carney for the National Library of Medicine and the American Medical Women's Association Local Legends Award.

Dr. Carney graduated from Middlebury College and received her M.D. from the University of Cincinnati. Following medical school, Dr. Carney returned to Vermont where she completed an Internal Medicine residency at the Medical Center Hospital of Vermont and served as Chief Medical Resident the following year. In 1987, she earned a Master's degree in Public Health at the Harvard School of Public Health. Dr. Carney was appointed Deputy Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Health in 1988 and Commissioner of Health in 1989, serving under the administrations of Governors Madeline Kunin, Richard Snelling, and Howard Dean.

Dr. Carney is Board Certified in the areas of internal Medicine and Preventive Medicine and holds academic appointments at the University of Vermont College of Medicine, where she is a Clinical Professor of Medicine and Associate Dean for Public Health. In this position, she has been instrumental in educating future physician leaders and providing an essential bridge between public health practice and medicine.

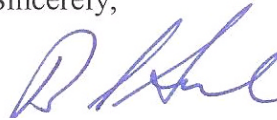
Great visionary leaders share many of the same qualities. One quality is the ability to develop a unique vision that attracts commitment, inspires people, revitalizes organizations, and mobilizes the resources needed to turn vision into reality. During her tenure with the Vermont State Health Department, Dr. Carney articulated a vision for the State of Vermont in the form of the "Healthy Vermonters" program. She successfully engaged a broad spectrum of health professionals, policy makers and citizens in linking their day to day activities to that vision.

"Healthy Vermonters" took a large and long view of public health. During her years at the helm, Vermonters experienced extraordinary gains in their health and well-being status, as captured in Vermont's annual "Social Well-Being of Vermonters". Great improvements were realized in the reduction of lead levels in babies' brains, making early baby visits almost universal in Vermont. Significant reductions were also realized in the rate of young baby child abuse. Increases in childhood immunizations were achieved, with Vermont leading all other states in percent of children fully immunized. Vermont also saw increased levels of prenatal care. All of these accomplishments helped set the stage for new improvements in other serious public health issues that impact long term health, such as childhood obesity.

Recently, Dr. Carney resigned from her post as Health Commissioner. She is now in service again as a new and valued board member of the embattled Fletcher Allen Health Care system, where she will undoubtedly have an important impact in bringing the institution closer to the mission of community service.

As Vermont's Congressman I had the opportunity of working with Dr. Jan Carney on a number of issues important to the health and wellbeing of the people of Vermont and very much appreciated the cooperation she provided. Dr. Jan Carney is truly a "local legend" in Vermont and clearly deserves the recognition that this award would provide.

Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
Member of Congress